

## Instructional Readiness of Primary Teachers: Basis for an Intervention Plan

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### Abstract

Teachers' instructional readiness is a critical determinant of effective teaching and meaningful learning outcomes, particularly amid the evolving demands of basic education. This study assessed the instructional readiness of teachers in one school district of a large division in Central Philippines during SY 2021–2022. Using a descriptive research design, the researcher surveyed 86 primary school teachers selected through stratified random sampling from a total of 110. The survey instruments went through expert validation (rated 4.19, excellent) and reliability testing (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.978$ ). Frequency counts, means, and the Mann–Whitney U test were the main analytical tools. Instructional readiness of primary teachers settled at a high level and Very High Level in key variables; reproduction of modules (HL = 4.39), content knowledge (VHL = 4.50), and assessment of learning (HL = 4.35.31). When teachers were grouped by age, older ones scored significantly higher across all three domains. Meanwhile, comparative analysis in all three domains, reproduction of modules, content knowledge, and assessment of learning, all showed a p-value less than 0.05, which bears a significant interpretation. This indicates that teachers demonstrated competence and efficiency as they aged, their positions elevated, and with several years of experience. These results point to the value of professional development programs that intentionally strengthen competence and instructional readiness as part of DepEd's K to 12 reform agenda.

**Keywords:** *Instructional readiness, assessment of learning, descriptive research, K to 12 education*

### Bio-profiles

**Cherie Mae U. Nudalo** teaches in a public school under the DepEd Division of Cebu Province. She is completing her Master of Arts in Education, Major in Administration and Supervision, at STI West Negros University in Bacolod City. Her research focuses on instructional readiness of primary school teachers and professional practices in the new normal. Outside academia, she draws on her daily classroom experience to ground her research in the practical realities of Philippine public education.



## Introduction

### Rationale

The sudden shift to remote and blended learning during the COVID era has underscored the need for teachers to be equipped and to adapt to changing educational contexts, especially in developing countries like the Philippines, which are continually challenged by meager resources, congested classrooms, and limited professional development opportunities. Deped Order Number 12, series 2020, otherwise known as the "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020 - 2021 in Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency," emphasizes the key points to continue education amid a health crisis, thus paving the way to the advent of distance learning, significantly exposing the teachers to an unfamiliar yet challenging ground. It is a notable fact that teachers across the country possess minimal competence and readiness as regards the implementation of the new learning scheme (Anoba & Cahapay, 2020).

Instructional readiness, as used in this study, includes three important domains: first, the reproduction of learning modules refers to the preparation and distribution of learning modules to the intended learners; second, Content knowledge refers to the teachers' knowledge of the content or subject matter being taught. This also covers the expertise and mastery of the specified skills and competencies at the specified grade level. Lastly, Assessment of Learning is a set of instructions that teacher utilized to determine and make judgments on student achievements against goals and standards (Yan, 2021). Numerous local studies indicate that instructional readiness contributes positively to education by improving teaching performance, increasing learner engagement, and enhancing overall academic outcomes, making it a critical factor in effective instructional delivery in blended learning environments (Ramos et.al., 2025)

Yet, despite the related evidence, relatively few studies have examined how teachers' instructional readiness connects to school performance in Central Philippine settings. That gap motivated this research. The goal was to produce findings that school leaders and program planners could actually use—findings grounded in the specific conditions of a district where tourism, farming, and fishing shape the local economy.

### Literature Review

A broad body of literature supports the idea that teachers' instructional readiness is a critical determinant of effective teaching. Mehta (2020) reported that teachers generally possess the qualifications and skills to be considered instructionally ready to perform their teaching duties, including the use of technology as an aid in the distance learning modality. Similarly, Cutri et al. (2020) in their study, Faculty Readiness for Online Crisis teaching, concluded that teachers at Brigham University possess the necessary readiness in transitioning to online teaching during the COVID-19 crisis. The rapid transition forced them to realign their skills and



competencies to meet the learning demands. Consistent with the preceding findings, Rapanta et al. (2021) emphasized teachers' readiness in Europe, especially in terms of content knowledge. Teachers were able to adapt micro-level strategies, including pedagogical strategies and teaching methods that bridge the distance between teachers and students, whether referring to the remote aspects of teaching and learning or to the transactional distance present in all learning environments. Local studies showed alignment of results. Gloria et al. (2017) and Pentang et al. (2022) found that Filipino teachers are ready to implement distance learning in the country.

However, significant findings showed contention, such as Manisha Paliwal and Archana Singh (2021), who emphasized that the level of readiness of Indian teachers is insufficient to support the teaching-learning demands of the new educational landscape. Teachers' capacity in time management, competency development, and assessment of learning is also insufficient. Damsa et al. (2021) found results that corroborate these findings, stressing the low technical readiness of teachers in some Asian countries. It was found that some teachers at the school have been unable to use computers or Android mobile phones to carry out teaching and learning in the new normal, so they require special assistance and training from teachers who possess the skills and competence.

### Theoretical Underpinnings

Two theories guided this study. First, Lev Vygotsky (1978) defined the Zone of Proximal Development as the gap between what a learner can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guidance from a more knowledgeable individual, such as a teacher. According to Vygotsky, learning is fundamentally a social and cognitive process in which interaction and guided support play central roles in intellectual development. Consistently, teachers must be prepared and competent enough to diagnose learners' current abilities and provide appropriate scaffolding strategies. A teacher who lacks readiness may either give tasks that are too easy, leading to stagnation, or too difficult, causing frustration. Thus, effective instructional readiness ensures that teaching strategies, materials, and pacing are aligned with learners' developmental levels, thereby maximizing learning outcomes. Secondly, Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), Misha & Kohler (2006) posits that effective teaching requires the dynamic integration of three core knowledge domains: Content Knowledge (SK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Technological Knowledge (TK). Rather than treating these domains independently, TPACK emphasizes their intersection - where teachers must understand how to use technology to deliver subject content through appropriate pedagogical strategies. This framework is especially relevant to modern education, where digital tools are embedded in instructional processes.



## Objectives

The study set out to answer straightforward yet important questions. First, what were the teachers' ages, positions, and teaching experience? Second, what is the level of instructional readiness of primary teachers? Third, what is the level of instructional readiness among teachers when grouped by the profile variables? Fourth, the central question was whether there was a significant difference in the level of instructional readiness among primary teachers when grouped by the profile variables.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the instructional readiness of primary teachers in the San Francisco District. The design was deemed appropriate because it allows for a systematic description and analysis of teachers' instructional readiness in terms of module reproduction, content knowledge, and assessment of learning. It also facilitated comparisons of responses across age, plantilla position, and teaching experience groups. The test of significant difference is purposely utilized to statistically explain and interpret the instructional readiness of primary teachers across all chosen variables.

### Locale of the Study

The study took place in a school district within a large division in Central Philippines during SY 2021–2022. The district is roughly 75 miles from Cebu City and features gently rolling terrain, fertile land, and surrounding marine resources that support local livelihoods. The local economy is largely dependent on farming and fishing. Over the years, the district brought honor and fame to the educational landscape as a consistent awardee in academic and non-academic competitions.

### Respondents of the Study

Of 110 teachers across 12 schools, 86 were included in the sample. Cochran's formula set the target number, and stratified random sampling with a lottery draw ensured that each school was proportionally represented. The final pool broke down as follows: 48 teachers aged 39 or younger, 38 aged 40 or older; 56 holding the position of teacher 2 or lower, 30 holding a teacher 3 or higher; and 44 with less than 10 years of teaching experience, 42 with 10 or more years.

### Data Gathering Instrument

A survey instrument is purposely devised to gather pertinent data. Part 1 intends to provide the respondent's profile, and Part 2 tends to assess the instructional readiness of primary teachers with the chosen three areas, namely, reproduction of modules, content knowledge, and assessment of learning, both containing ten line items. The instrument uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from Very Low Level (1) to Very High Level (5).



## Instrument Validity and Reliability

Three experts—an Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, a District Supervisor, and a School Principal, all with doctoral degrees—reviewed the instrument for face and content validity. Their combined rating, computed using Good and Scates' criteria, came to 4.19 (excellent). For reliability, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 teachers in the same district who were not part of the actual sample. Cronbach's Alpha returned a coefficient of 0.978, confirming excellent internal consistency (Bonett & Wright, 2019).

## Data Gathering Procedure and Ethics

The researcher secured a permit from the Schools Division Superintendent. She then coordinated with individual school heads and personally explained the study's purpose to each set of respondents before handing out the questionnaires. Participation was voluntary; every respondent signed an informed consent form and was assured that their identities would be protected through pseudonyms. Anyone could withdraw at any point without consequences. Once the questionnaires were returned, the data were encoded and analyzed in SPSS.

## Statistical Tools

Means and frequency counts described the respondents' profiles and the levels of EI and engagement. Because each profile variable was split into two groups, the Mann–Whitney U test—appropriate for ordinal data with independent samples—was used to check for significant differences. Spearman's rho measured the strength and direction of the relationship between emotional intelligence and learner engagement. The interpretation scale ran from Very High (4.50–5.00) down to Very Low (1.00–1.49), with the same thresholds applied to both variables.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**

*Profile of the Respondents*

| Variables           | Categories                     | f  | %     |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Age                 | Younger (below 40 years old)   | 48 | 55.80 |
|                     | Older (40 years old and above) | 38 | 44.20 |
| Plantilla Position  | Lower (teacher 2 and below)    | 56 | 65.10 |
|                     | Higher (teacher 3 and above)   | 30 | 34.90 |
| Teaching Experience | Few (below 10 years)           | 44 | 51.20 |
|                     | Many (10 years and above)      | 42 | 48.80 |

Younger primary school teachers are the most numerous, with a frequency of 48 (55.80%), and older teachers are in the minority, with a frequency of 38 (44.20%). This is not



unusual, since the Department of Education implemented a massive hiring of teachers to support K-12 implementation, decongest classrooms, reduce workload, and support learning recovery (Post-COVID Post-Covid era). Seemingly, teachers occupying lower positions account for the majority, with a frequency of 56 or 65.10%, and those occupying higher positions account for 30 or 34.90%. Teaching experience follows the same pattern, with teachers with fewer years of experience dominating at 44 (51.20%) and the counterpart at 42 (48.80%). Consistently stressed by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, the teaching workforce in the Philippines is characterized by a steady influx of beginning teachers, leading to the numerical dominance of younger educators in several school settings (PIDS, 2020).

**Table 2***Summary of Teachers' Instructional Readiness*

| Domain                  | Overall Mean | Interpretation  |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Reproduction of Modules | 4.39         | High Level      |
| Content Knowledge       | 4.50         | Very High Level |
| Assessment of Learning  | 4.35         | High Level      |

Teachers scored a remarkably high level in two domains and a Very High Level in one domain. This manifests that primary school teachers were able to adapt the trends and mechanics in modular learning modality (Hung, 2020), more so in the production of modules, thus emerging readiness, competence, and creativity of the teachers had surfaced amid the most trying moments in the history of formal education in the country.

The second domain obtained the highest score of 4.50, interpreted as Very High Level, which significantly means primary school teachers are equipped with the necessary competence and skills in the discharge of their professional duties as demanded by the new educational landscape (Rapanta et al., 2021).

**Table 3***Comparative Analysis of Teachers' Instructional Readiness by Age (Mann–Whitney U Test)*

| Domain                  | Category | N  | Mean Rank | U      | p    | Sig. |
|-------------------------|----------|----|-----------|--------|------|------|
| Reproduction of Modules | Younger  | 48 | 34.50     | 480.00 | .000 | S    |
|                         | Older    | 38 | 76.95     |        |      |      |
| Content Knowledge       | Younger  | 48 | 37.01     | 600.50 | .004 | S    |
|                         | Older    | 38 | 51.70     |        |      |      |
| Assessment of Learning  | Younger  | 48 | 33.51     | 432.50 | .000 | S    |
|                         | Older    | 38 | 56.12     |        |      |      |



Age made a significant difference. Across all stipulated domains, older teachers outscored younger ones by a statistically significant margin. The widest gaps showed up in reproduction of modules (mean ranks of 34.50 vs. 76.95,  $p < .000$ ). This simply means that older teachers tend to possess the instructional readiness and efficiency as compared to the younger counterpart. Inarguably, older teachers tend to receive more training and developmental sessions, thus strengthening skills that were established. Experienced teachers consistently perform better in instructional delivery and assessment practices compared to novice teachers (Bautista, 2021; Paguia, 2019).

### Conclusion

This study set out to determine the level of instructional readiness of teachers when grouped and compared to the selected variables, and whether or not a significant difference existed between the level of instructional readiness of primary school teachers when grouped and compared according to the chosen variables. Generally, the answer to the first determined purpose is High Level, which means primary school teachers of a certain district in Central Philippines possess the required instructional readiness in the implementation of learning recovery by the Department of education. Secondly, significant difference existed across three variables with a p-value of all less than 0.05, which conclusively means that the instructional readiness of primary school teachers is significantly affected by age, plantilla position, and teaching experience. The higher the age, position, and teaching experience, the better the instructional performance and efficiency will be.

What should schools do with these findings? Key strategic activities per line item garnering the lowest score are hereby proposed for implementation; for Reproduction of Modules, a 3-day training workshop for teachers is designed with a title “Improving Technical Practices in Crafting Modules”, purposely designed to establish a standardized assurance system to craft modules ensuring accuracy, completeness, and alignment to MELC. For Content Knowledge, a 2-day training workshop entitled "Maximizing ICT Concepts and Mechanics" was held to improve the technical ICT competence of teachers. Lastly, Assessment of Learning, a 3-day training workshop entitled "Contextualization Context," is designed to upskill and deepen teachers' conceptual understanding and assessment mechanics consistent with DepEd standards.

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### Conflict of Interest

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